

Before Hall of Famer Ernie Banks became Mr. Cub, he was 17 years old playing in a sandlot in Dallas, TX. That is where Cool Papa Bell, one of the legendary leaders in the Negro League, discovered this young man and signed him to play for the Kansas City Monarchs for \$7 a game.

While playing for the Monarchs, Ernie Banks was managed by another legend, Buck O'Neil.

Playing for the Negro League legend had a profound impact on young Ernie Banks. Buck had so much love for everybody that Ernie decided to model his life after him. It was with the Monarchs that Ernie learned to play with boundless energy and enthusiasm. He learned to express his joy for the game and took to heart the message Buck O'Neil, the manager, would often shout at him: "You gotta love this game to play it!" Ernie Banks loved it, and it showed.

Years later, O'Neil reunited with Ernie Banks when O'Neil agreed to manage the Cubs in 1962. Incidentally, he was the first African-American manager in Major League Baseball.

As one of the first African-American baseball players in the Major Leagues, Ernie Banks helped break down the color barriers. The Hall of Fame slugger and two-time MVP made his Major League debut at Wrigley Field in 1953, and he became the first African American to suit up for the Chicago Cubs.

He was only 180 pounds. He was not the most intimidating batter at the plate, but he had powerful wrists that generated tremendous bat speed. He whipped the bat through the ball, hitting 512 home runs in his career, with 2,583 hits, 1,636 RBIs, and having a career batting average of .274.

From 1955 to 1960, he was the most prolific home run hitter in the game, hitting more home runs than either Hank Aaron, Willie Mays, or Mickey Mantle during those years.

In 1958 and 1959, he was named the most valuable player in the National League. He was the first ever to win the award in consecutive years.

He was also the first player to have his jersey number retired by the Cubs, and on game days his number 14 flies proudly over the left field foul pole at the friendly confines of Wrigley Field.

Not surprisingly, Ernie Banks was inducted into Cooperstown the first year he was eligible. But it wasn't the numbers on the back of the baseball card that made Mr. Cub a beloved member of Chicago and the community. It was his passion for the game and the appreciation he showed to everyone he encountered.

Over the last several days, I have heard from baseball fans sharing their stories of meeting Mr. Cub. Nearly all were humbled by the opportunity to meet their hero, but even more impressed to find that Ernie was just as appreciative of his fans as they were of him.

It is an understatement to say that the Chicago Cubs had some tough sea-

sons during Ernie's 19-year career. The Cubs had not won a World Series since 1908 or a National League title since 1945. But every day, win or lose, Ernie would lace up his cleats, step on the field, and smile for the whole world to see. You could not help but love watching him play.

And for Ernie Banks, the eternal optimist, he always believed this was going to be the year for the Cubs. Every spring he predicted, without fail, the Cubs were going to win the pennant.

Well, Ernie never got to play in the post season. But his love of the game never wavered despite this. He became famous for his contagiously positive attitude. He often remarked: "It's a great day for baseball. Let's play two." That was the charm of Mr. Cub.

An 11-time All-Star, first-ballot Hall of Famer, selected to baseball's All-Century team in 1999, it was never about accolades or money for Ernie. He played for the pure joy of the game.

After hitting his 500th home run, becoming only the 9th player to achieve that feat, he summed up his feelings by saying: "The riches of the game are in the thrills, not the money." That is an inspiring message.

In 2013, I contacted some friends in the White House and asked President Obama to consider a Medal of Freedom for Ernie Banks. I felt that his impressive career with the Cubs and his courage in breaking down the color barrier in baseball were reason enough. But more than these amazing achievements, Ernie's spirit set him apart.

It was a special moment to be there at the White House when Ernie Banks received the Presidential Medal of Freedom. I was honored to see it and experience it.

After being awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, we held a reception for him in my office up here. I don't know if there have ever been so many humbled politicians coming by my office looking for an autograph. He happened to sign this photo for me that day that I have in the Chamber. I remember JOHNNY ISAKSON from Georgia—a faithful Atlanta Braves fan—made a point of being there to meet Ernie Banks. And I remember HARRY REID, when he met Ernie Banks, said: "I used to play a little baseball." Ernie Banks said to him: "Well, Senator REID, what position did you play?" He said: "I was a catcher." Ernie Banks said: "If you were truly a catcher, get down in that catcher's position." Somehow or another, HARRY REID got down in that catcher's position right in my office to prove it to Ernie Banks.

Ernie could not have been more gracious with his time, signing autographs for everybody who showed up. He made time for everybody.

The North Side of Chicago and Wrigley Field will not be the same without Ernie. "Let's play two" will echo off the bricks and ivy for generations to come. His positive, hopeful, Cub view of life filled every room and

every baseball diamond he ever touched.

And now it would seem they need to find a new roster spot on the Field of Dreams—and everyone better be ready for daytime double-headers too.

Ernie Banks, your spirit, passion, and sunny outlook on life will be missed.

I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

KEYSTONE XL PIPELINE ACT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 1, which the clerk will report.

The assistant bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1) to approve the Keystone XL Pipeline.

Pending:

Murkowski amendment No. 2, in the nature of a substitute.

Vitter/Cassidy modified amendment No. 80 (to amendment No. 2), to provide for the distribution of revenues from certain areas of the Outer Continental Shelf.

Murkowski (for Sullivan) amendment No. 67 (to amendment No. 2), to restrict the authority of the Environmental Protection Agency to arm agency personnel.

Cardin amendment No. 75 (to amendment No. 2), to provide communities that rely on drinking water from a source that may be affected by a tar sands spill from the Keystone XL pipeline an analysis of the potential risks to public health and the environment from a leak or rupture of the pipeline.

Murkowski amendment No. 98 (to amendment No. 2), to express the sense of Congress relating to adaptation projects in the United States Arctic region and rural communities.

Flake amendment No. 103 (to amendment No. 2), to require the evaluation and consolidation of duplicative green building programs.

Cruz amendment No. 15 (to amendment No. 2), to promote economic growth and job creation by increasing exports.

Moran/Cruz amendment No. 73 (to amendment No. 2), to delist the lesser prairie-chicken as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act of 1973.

Daines amendment No. 132 (to amendment No. 2), to express the sense of Congress regarding the designation of National Monuments.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

Mr. COATS. Madam President, I came to the floor to speak about a measure that is supported by Members of both sides. I was listening to the remarks by the minority whip on who commemorated the life of Ernie Banks.

REMEMBERING ERNIE BANKS

I began school in Chicago in the early 1960s, when Ernie Banks was playing, and it is to be noted for the record that my grade point average would have been higher had I not spent so many afternoons at Wrigley Field watching the Cubs play. During that time all the games were played during the day, and